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easy for *Sxaiaxwax* to gain control over them, and the sleeper wakes to find that he has been bleeding profusely and death is inevitable. This occurred to a man whose experiences are described in vol. I, chap. IX.

Although *Sxaiaxwax* is usually a curse to mortals, he can also do good. Occasionally he makes a man a shaman, and in many cases he helps a woman in childbirth. Such beneficent acts are not sufficient to counterbalance his evil deeds, and he remains one of the most dreaded of Bella Coola supernatural beings, a monster whose machinations make camping in a strange place a dangerous undertaking, and who is as likely to strike down rich or poor, young or old.

Less feared than *Sxaiaxwax*, because he appears less frequently, is *Allät·iaistl*. The Bella Coola speak of this being with trepidation, but little definite information could be obtained concerning him. He has human form and sometimes comes at dusk to cause death by carrying away a man's spirit."[1] The home of this creature appears to be beneath the earth rather than in *Nusmät·a*.

A third dreaded being who, like the two preceding, usually lives on this earth and only visits in *Nusmät·a*, is *Sä·lma*, "The Death Dealer." He, too, appears in human form and can be distinguished by the nose-ring which he always wears. Sudden death in the forest is always attributed to "The Death Dealer." If a man is engulfed by a slide, or killed by a falling tree, it is because this malevolent being has entered the slide or tree. Some Bella Coola say that he is responsible for animals who kill hunters. He rarely carries out his designs with the aid of sickness, nor is death by drowning often attributed to him, but for all other fatal disasters he must take the blame. While a corpse is resting in a coffin awaiting burial, *Sä·lma* invariably sits on the cover, though none can see him. Instances are known in which even this monster has acted in a kindly manner.

The supernatural beings thus far described are usually

[1] See vol. I, pp. 94-7.

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843 be avoided. If she walks on a beaver dam, or dips her head
825 into a pool made by this animal, the birth of her infant will be blocked in the same way that the dam restrains a stream. This difficulty can be obviated, however, by dipping up the water with her hands instead of bending her head to the surface to drink. As far as possible, she must avoid being startled by
[774] small animals or reptiles; even if the excitement so caused is too slight to expel her own spirit, it may be sufficient to damage that of the foetus. Such dangers can be countered by means of magical rites (I, p. 720). Her husband is also subject to certain injunctions and prohibitions. If he eats beaver meat his wife's delivery will be difficult. He must preserve a small
[846] piece of the skin or an eye of every animal that he kills; a few days after birth the child is steeped in the smoke of a fire on which these articles have been thrown. This prevents injury from the father's quarry.[1]

A pregnant woman continues to reside in her own house, where her condition is a source of interest to her friends and
844 relatives. There are no midwives with inheritable professional
[424] prerogatives, but as the time for delivery draws near, arrangements are made for the mother or some other experienced female relative to be in attendance. It is quite proper for the husband to attend to this point, though it is customary for elderly female relations to do so, sometimes those of the wife, sometimes those of her husband. A woman who, having herself borne children, has assisted at many births with success, is often requested to be present, and it is taken as a matter of course that she will be rewarded for her services.

When the pains of labour begin, the patient leaves the house with her assistant or assistants. In summer the party goes to some lonely spot in the woods where a rude wind-break may have been erected; in winter, to a sheltered spot beneath a
[171] house. No man can be present, a point in which the Bella Coola state that their culture differs from that of the Kwakiutl. The midwife manipulates the infant so that the birth is made

[1] This rite is described in detail later (I, p. 730).

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as easy as possible. Women seldom experience difficulty and suffer, on the whole, less than do white mothers. It is believed that *Sxaiaxwax*, though invisible, is present on every occasion; the rendering of assistance at childbirth is his one kindly act.

The umbilical cord was formerly cut with a mussel shell, but for many years the use of a metal knife has been customary. The after-birth usually comes away easily, but if there is delay, hot ashes are placed around the feet and at the back of the woman to accelerate its expulsion. It is immediately buried or placed beneath a large tree in the forest; if burnt, the infant will always be weakly. While one of the assistants disposes of it, another washes the new-born child. The cloths and dishes used for this purpose are burnt; failure to do so is believed to cause the child to become blind through a white film forming over the eyeballs. Then the mother and midwives return to the house with the infant, who is a source of tremendous interest to the community. It is proper for the father to recompense the attendants at once, in accordance with their skill and his generosity. A woman who has had several children often assists the daughter of a friend, then, as she gains more experience, her reputation grows and her help is more commonly sought. At the time of this study, 1922, the sum of $2.50 was considered suitable recompense for a fairly proficient midwife.

A new-born child takes the breast readily and a mother would be considered harsh indeed if she failed to suckle her infant whenever it cried, since scientific hours for feeding are not known. A child is wrapped in a shawl or a blanket and carried by the mother wherever she goes; when in the house it sprawls contentedly on the floor, unhampered by clothing. When the umbilical cord falls, it is preserved by the mother. Soon after birth, the parents make provision for their child's welfare by magical means (I, p. 700). The heavy infantile death-rate of the Bella Coola cannot be attributed to lack of love or care on the part of parents, but the attention lavished is commonly not of the kind that assists a weakly child to survive the perils of infancy.

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further conceptions by wriggling her body on her haunches immediately after the delivery of a child. 842

To the Bella Coola religious concepts of birth are as important as the physiological aspects. The blood discharged at birth, and the mother from whom it has come, is *sxaiäx*, a word difficult to translate. It is applied to a person or thing which is taboo, and combines the significance of "uncanny," "abhorred," "to be avoided," "feared"; perhaps "unclean," in the biblical sense, is the best synonym. Essentially human, this blood is not only potent against supernatural beings, but is dangerous to man as well. For this reason a mother must never be delivered within a house. The smell of the unclean blood might kill all resident within, or at least prevent them receiving presents of any kind. Supernatural beings and inherent supernatural powers are alike repelled by it. 826 844 783

A recent mother is taboo and must exercise due precautions to prevent her baneful influence from affecting her associates, but this power is most strongly present in one who has borne twins. Even younger people, sophisticated in most matters, shudder when speaking of twins; fortunately, double births are not common. They are attributed to the entry of a salmon into the body, so that a twin is half-salmon, half-human. Occasionally a woman who is pregnant with twins discovers her condition in a dream and avoids the perils of a multiple birth by calling upon a shaman to remove the spirit from one foetus so that the infant will be born dead and deformed. If this is not done, the two infants arrive in due course, to the horror and grief of parents and relatives. Though abhorred, no case is known of the killing of a twin at birth. 845 [825] [787] [756] [847]

Instead of the two children being brought back to the village, word is sent to the father who must join his wife in the temporary shelter in the woods where delivery took place. For one year, they must not return home, and during this period must eat no salmon. Four times during the year they must shift from one shelter to another, each built on the bank of a small creek. The mother can draw water from this stream

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phases of activity, leaving here only certain rules about diet and a number of prohibitions which hunters must observe.

FOOD TABOOS OBSERVED BY WOMEN

Women must not eat bear meat. To do so would derange the catamenia and cause profuse growth of hair.

Women of child-bearing age must not eat beaver. To do so would cause a difficult delivery.

A woman of child-bearing age must not eat toasted salmon until the sticks have been removed which held it in front of the fire. She will bear twins if this injunction is disregarded.

TABOOS OBSERVED BY HUNTERS

No hunter or fisherman may leave the village in the morning if he has been foolish enough to break the night's fast. It is customary to depart at dawn and take a small meal when nearing the hunting or fishing-ground.

No hunter may drink water in which dog salmon have been soaked. Animals dislike this liquid and avoid a man with it in his stomach.

When traps have been set, and a party of hunters is sitting around the camp-fire in the evening, no one must pass between it and one of his fellows. If this should be done, heedlessly, animals would disregard the bait that has been set out.

When mountain goat hunters are travelling, the most expert must lead the party. When he sits down, so must the others, and no one can change places with him. This is said to be a custom of the Carriers as well as of the Bella Coola.

When a hunter is cutting up a bear, he must be careful not to cut a vein which is said to run across the chest and down each fore-paw. To do so causes sickness.

When a hunter kills a bear, he must place either the skull or the whole head in a tree near the scene of the kill, otherwise he will become blind. In some families, the men remove only an eye, place it in a notched stick and set this under an over-

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[the Dance of Mother-Nature]

season, subject to the usual consent of the marshals. No description need be given of the coming of the call and of the ritual of *lsxtämem*. A large amount of wood is required, and on the night of *nusiutälsap* the many carpentry tasks are allotted. A large masked wooden figure is made to represent Mother-Nature herself, two more of the elderly women who attend her, and one of the inevitable *Ăno'likwoksaix*. Besides, masks must be made of almost all the flowers and the trees, their number only limited by X's willingness to reward the carpenters. It is said that formerly as many as three hundred masks were sometimes ordered.

No detailed description is required for *qothm*, but the ritual on *nakusam* differs from that of all other dances. Early in the morning a number of *kukusuit* gather in X's house where the carpenters decide on two old women to wear masks representing hags of great age and ugliness. A number of *kukusiut* accompany them to the bottom house of the village where they call out:

"We are in great trouble. Our daughter's child is long overdue. If you know of any good medicines, will you not give them to us for her?"

The *kukusiut* drone when they see and hear these supernatural visitors, and many of them give medicines to the old women to increase the realistic effect. This is repeated in every house of the village.

That night when all is ready, the uninitiated are called in and take their places in the two corners near the door. They see in the central position behind the fire a large wooden figure wearing the mask of a woman in the pangs of labour with enormously distended stomach. She is *Nuwuska*, Mother-Nature, though the uninitiated do not know this as yet. She lies on some raised planking; slightly below her are two old women carrying sponges of dyed and undyed cedar-bark, as if they were midwives prepared to wash a new-born infant. Two matting enclosures have been constructed, one in each of the rear corners of the house, large enough to hide the per-

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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*575 *796 824 [532] [844]

formers who are chosen for their small stature. *Ano'likwoisair* stands up ready to explain as usual. One of the actors now comes forth from beneath Mother-Nature's stomach, as if born of her, wearing a mask surmounted by a carved stick representing the leaves of the willow. The nurses handle the performer, as if washing a new-born child, and announce:

"It is a boy, Willow Leaves," just as a midwife might state the sex of an infant.

Willow Leaves dances around the fire, at intervals saying, "I am Willow Leaves."

Ano'likwoisair adds her comments: "Yes. There is Willow Leaves, see him."

The masked figure goes into the matting enclosure out of sight. The next plant to be born is Gooseberry, for whom the same procedure is carried out, before he, too, disappears. In succession, a few minutes apart, come Nettle, all kinds of Grass, and Western Skunk Cabbage. Each is washed and the sex announced; then the figure dances and *Ano'likwoisair* comments as before. A good dancer is always chosen for the next figure, Black Cottonwood, who is "born" in the same way, but instead of vanishing into the enclosure remains dancing to and fro on the upper, upstream, side of the house. After him comes "The Dancing Tree," the American Aspen. An agile man is likewise chosen for this part and he remains dancing back and forth on the lower, downstream, side. *Ano'likwoisair* announces, amid breathless interest: "The South Wind is coming."

*575 *796 824 532

This figure enters the house by the front door, wearing the mask of a handsome young man. He goes to *Nawaaska* like a doctor called in to assist, and when he stands up, her face appears like that of a happy woman who has just given birth. The uninitiated do not realize that a new mask has been put on Mother-Nature while her face was hidden from their sight. The South Wind then retires to the lower side of the house, where he dances to and fro near Aspen, at intervals going up to his patient. In rushes the North Wind, but he is too late to accom-

6:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1892
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out by the strong breeze blowing in the higher regions. He is quite naked, and bites everyone whom he can lay hold of. If he cannot catch anyone he will bite his own arm. It is believed that he has lost his soul, which fled from the body when the spirit came to him. Therefore the shamans must try for four days to recapture his soul. The night after they have recovered it the tlaqō'lis dances clothed in a bear-skin and wearing a large headring, heavy bracelets and anklets, all made of red and white cedar-bark. Some tlaqō'lis do not bite people, but merely devour raw salmon, or tear dogs to pieces and devour them. Those who bite people will also eat corpses. The tlaqō'lis has to observe a number of regulations. For four years after his initiation he must not gamble. He must stay away from his wife for one year, but this period is being reduced to one month. For two or three months he must not leave his house.

The Ō'tsq (= the laugher) and the Dā'lis (= the thrower) do not go into the woods to be initiated, but both must fast three days before their first dance. The Ō'tsq 'makes fun of everything' and scratches people with his nails. The Dā'lis carries stones and sticks, and breaks household goods and canoes. If he has destroyed some object during the day he pays for it at night when he dances. The Ō'tsq and the Dā'lis must stay for one month, after they have danced, in their houses.

If a person transgresses the laws of the Kā'xōlā, for instance when the tlaqō'lis gambles, or when a man performs a dance to which he has no right, also when a person deviates the ceremonies or makes a mistake in dancing, his punishment is death. The chiefs assemble in council and the offender is called before the court. After his offence has been proved he is asked whether he is willing to suffer the penalty of death. If he is not willing, and one of his relatives is found willing to take the penalty on himself, the guilty party is spared, and the substitute is killed in his stead. The execution of the judgment is entrusted to the shaman, who bewitches the condemned person by throwing disease into him, or by poisoning him in some other (supernatural?) way. The object thrown by the shaman is a shell, bone, or finger-nail, around the middle of which objects a human hair is tied. If this object strikes the offender he will fall sick. Blood collects in his stomach, and if it so happens that he vomits this blood, and with it the disease-producing object, he will recover, and is not molested any further. The masks (not the whistles and other ornaments) used in the Kā'xōlā are burnt immediately at the close of each dancing season. Novices must wear a necklet of red cedar-bark over their blankets for a whole year. The masks used in the dances represent mythical personages, and the dances are pantomimic representations of myths. Among others the thunder-bird and his servant Atlpalā'tsmam, who wears a mask with red and blue stripes over the whole face from the right-hand upper side to the left-hand lower side, and a staff with red and blue spiral lines, appear in the dances. Prominent masks are also Qē'tsalēm and his brothers and his sister (see p. 412), Mamamalī'aq and his fellows, the raven and the Hamē'tsta, and many others.

Customs regarding Birth, Puberty, Marriage, and Death.

When the time of delivery approaches, the woman leaves the house and resorts to a small hut built for the purpose. She is assisted by pro-

6:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1892
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844 fessional midwives. The child is washed in warm water. For ten days
[846] the mother must remain in this hut. Father and mother must not go
[825] near the room for a year (according to Nuak'xlu'sta, for ten days), else
the salmon would take offence.

553 The child is soon given its first name. On this occasion the whole
[852] tribe is invited to a feast, the name is made public, and the guests receive
[556] small presents. The child retains this name until it becomes a member
of the Kû'siût, when it is given its Kû'siût name. This ceremony takes
place after puberty has been reached. About this period the young man
gives his first potlatch and assumes the Qê'mtaloa name.

881 When a girl reaches puberty she must stay in the shed which serves
as her bedroom, where she has a separate fireplace. She is not allowed
to descend to the main part of the house, and must not sit by the fire of
the family. For four days she must remain motionless in a sitting pos-
ture. She fasts during the daytime, but is allowed a little food and
drink at a very early hour in the morning. After this term she may
leave her room, but only through a separate opening. She must not yet
[293] come to the main room. When leaving the house she wears a large hat,
[821] which protects her face against the rays of the sun. It is believed that
if the sun should shine on her face her eyes would suffer. She may
pick berries on the hills, but must not come near the river or sea for
[263] a whole year. She must not eat fresh salmon, else she would lose
her senses, or her mouth would be transformed into a long beak. She
[261] must not chew gum or eat snow (see Fifth Report of Committee,
1890, p. 838).

584 If a young man wishes to marry a girl he goes, surrounded by his
[431] friends, to the house of the girl's father and states his intention. His
friends carry food and presents, and if the father accepts the suit he
sends out a young man, who receives the food and presents and carries
them into the house. Sometimes the father does not accept the offer at
once. In such cases the young man may repeat the same ceremony until
[527] he is finally rejected or accepted. After the time of the marriage has
been agreed upon between the contracting parties, and the day preceding
the marriage has arrived, the young man invites all the people to a feast,
during which he states that he is to be married on the following day.
He asks a number of men, generally from twenty to thirty, and four
[302] women to assist him. On the following forenoon they assemble, and
585 accompany the bridegroom to the girl's house. They sing outside, and
four of the men dance. All of them have their faces painted red. Finally
they enter, and the bridegroom gives a large amount of property to the
girl's father. Then the girl leaves her parents and goes to the bride-
groom, bringing him also a large amount of property which has been
[431] given to her for this purpose by her parents and relatives. He in turn
gives her blankets and other apparel of the best quality, and distributes
presents among her relatives. This is repeated after some time. All he
has given to his bride and her relatives is repaid to him with interest.
A rich girl will repay twice or three times the amount given by the man.
At the time of the marriage the bride's father may promise the groom to
give him his Sisaa'kn secrets as soon as the pair have their first child.
[851] The children may belong to the father's or mother's gens, as the parents
may choose.

586 In case of a separation the wife refunds the amount of purchase-
money. The children may stay with either parent, or part of them may